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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

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Subject: "DISINFECTANTS AND THE LAW." Information from Federal Food and Drug Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Disinfectants that violated the Insecticide Act are the subject of today's report from the Federal Food and Drug Administration.

If, for the moment, you have forgotten the connection between the Federal Food and Drug Administration and the Federal Insecticide Act, I shall remind you that the former enforces the latter. And the latter, you will recall -- meaning the Insecticide Act -- forbids the transportation of adulterated or misbranded insecticides and fungicides in interstate commerce. Also, the Act forbids any false or misleading claims as to the effectiveness of an insecticide or fungicide.

Now, referring again to the disinfectants that found themselves in the toils of the law, and quoting directly from today's report:

"Feeble disinfectants -- those that claim to do what they cannot do -- are not only economic cheats but also real health hazards," states our correspondent. "Consider, for example, a product called 'H & D Health Spray,' the manufacturer of which was recently fined \$50 and costs, totaling \$70.50, for shipping his 'Health Spray' in interstate commerce.

"'H & D Health Spray' was misbranded and adulterated under the provisions of the Insecticide Act. The so-called 'Health Spray' contained 94 percent of water (a fact which was not mentioned on the label), and less of the active constituents than the label claimed. It was recommended as a disinfectant and germ destroyer for use by morticians, doctors, hospitals, homes, hotels, schools, state institutions, office buildings, beauty parlors, dry cleaners; steamship, cab, bus, and railroad companies.

"It was further recommended for preventing the spread of colds, influenza, and other contagious diseases; to purify the air, to banish all odors, destroy moths, and drive out insects," still quoting our correspondent.

"The truth is," she continues, "that 'H & D Health Spray' was not effective as a germicide, disinfectant, or antiseptic. It would not purify the air, banish odors, destroy moths, or drive out all insects. It would not maintain or improve health, as the name would imply."

Well, so much for the so-called health spray -- "which was both an economic cheat and a hazard to health if used by people who depended on it to prevent the spread of colds, influenza and other contagious diseases."

Next, our correspondent reports a fine of \$150 imposed on the manufacturer of

three misbranded products: "Spratt's Germicide," "Spratt's Antiseptic Germicidal Flea Soap," and "Spratt's Flea and Insect Powder." The powder, by the way, was adulterated as well as misbranded.

The germicide, according to our official reporter, contained inert substance, the label failing to bear the declaration of ingredients required by law. The labeling also bore a number of false and misleading claims. For instance, the germicide was represented as being non-poisonous, a killer of microbes of all kinds, a disinfectant of tainted land, and kennels infected with mange, distemper, or any contagious diseases. The germicide also violated the law because of false and fraudulent claims for gastritis, distemper, and so forth.

The soap -- the "Antiseptic Germicidal Flea Soap" -- was neither antiseptic nor germicidal, when used as the label directed. The flea soap would not sterilize veterinary instruments as claimed on the label, nor was it an effective treatment for ticks on dogs.

Now let's see what's next.... Well, here's another product that violated the Insecticide Act, because it couldn't live up to its label claims. The name is "Antzis" -- spelled A-n-t-z-i-s. This product was put up in tubes, similar to toothpaste tubes, fastened to a display card bearing the statement: "I am safe to use about the home."

However, the product was not safe to use about the home. It contained thallium acetate, which is a deadly and dangerous poison. The product was further misbranded in that the labeling bore extravagant claims which could not be substantiated. These claims were that the preparation would kill pests anywhere, would destroy ant colonies in from three to five hours, and would be effective against cutworms, sow bugs, slugs, and so forth. The Company that violated the law by shipping "Antzis" in interstate commerce was fined 50 dollars.

Next, we have a moth preparation that brought the manufacturer a fine of 10 dollars. This preparation was composed of dainty pink, lavender, and light green naphthalene blocks, six-sided, perfumed, with small wire molded in them for suspension purposes.

"It is obvious," says our correspondent, "that this pastel colored, perfumed moth preparation was made to appeal to Milady, rather than to the moths she sought to exterminate. The blocks were wrapped in cellophane, and the labels carried this statement: 'Exo Used for Moths Unwrap and Hang Up.' Used as directed, the product was worthless for the control of moths, and a fine of 10 dollars was imposed."

Well, I agree with our correspondent -- clothes moths are too smart to be taken in by pretty colors and fragrant scents.

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